

Mower Safety

An accident with a rotary mower can cost you your life. Following safety practices, using proper protective equipment correctly and keeping the mower in good repair will all help keep the operator safe.

Precautions for All Mowers:

- Prepare lawn/field for mowing. Every time before you mow, check your surface for items such as sticks, rocks, toys, sports equipment, dog bones, wire, and equipment parts. Make sure miscellaneous items are not hidden in tall grass. There is a danger of objects being thrown from under the mower by the blade, whose tip may be moving as fast as 200 miles per hour. A person struck by a rock or piece of wire thrown with such force could experience severe injury or even death.
- Handle fuel with care. A hot muffler can ignite vapors from gasoline. Always allow the mower to cool down before refueling. Any spilled gasoline should be wiped up immediately. Always refuel outdoors and move away from the fueling location at least 25 feet before starting the engine to avoid igniting fuel vapors that may linger for some time. Do not smoke while refueling.
- Wear appropriate clothes. Always wear sturdy, non-slip shoes instead of tennis shoes or sandals. Long pants help protect your legs from objects which may be thrown from under the mower.
- Never attempt to unclog or work on a lawnmower while the engine is running.
- Mow only in daylight.
- Keep the blade sharp to reduce the power required and to provide smoother cutting, and run the engine at the lowest speed that will do the job. The lower blade speed will reduce the force with which objects are thrown by the mower while at the same time reducing engine wear.
- Do not operate the mower in wet grass (walking on wet grass is a slipping hazard for you and more likely to cause the mower to clog).
- Before mowing, adjust the cutting height on mowers.
- Keep the discharge chute pointed away from buildings, people, and animals.
- Keep hands and feet away from all moving parts.
- Proceed slowly into tall, heavy grass to avoid choking the mower or stalling the motor.
- Set the mower at the highest cutting level when operating on rough ground.
- Do not touch hot motor parts.
- Do not spray cold water on a hot engine.
- Do not fuel the mower when the engine is hot or while the engine is running.

- Do not make wheel height adjustments while the motor is running.
- Do not leave blades rotating when crossing a graveled area.
- Check the blade-mounting bolts frequently for tightness.

Precautions for Riding Mowers:

- Drive the mower up and down gentle slopes for best stability. Back up moderate slopes. Avoid steep slopes completely.
- Slow down when turning sharply and on slopes to avoid tipping.
- Always look behind you for small children, pets, or obstructions, before backing the mower.
- Turn off the engine and wait for moving parts to stop before dismounting. Remove the key!
- Don't allow extra riders on your tractor, and keep other people out of your working area. Serious injury or death can result from falling off the tractor and being run over by the mower, the tractor wheel or being hit by a thrown object.

Precautions for Push Mowers:

- Push mowers should always be operated across the slope so your feet will not get under the mower if you slip, nor will the mower roll down the slope and run over you.
- Push the mower forward – do not pull it.
- If using an electric push mower, keep the electric cord out of the mowing path.
- Do not run with push powered mowers.
- If using a push powered mower be careful not to overdo your work capacity especially on hot days.
- Make sure the shields and other guards , such as the rear drag shield and the discharge deflector, are in place and working properly.
- Operate a “push” mower standing up straight, not bent over.
- Do not lift or tilt the mower while it is running.

- Adapted from the Ohio Nursery and Landscape Association's monthly publication, "The Buckeye", April 2009.